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Daniel

The Missionary



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The Missionary.

BY GEORGE DANIEL.

“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.”

S. Matth. chap. 5, ver. 4.



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To ***

ERE upon thy pillow thou
Shalt to night compose thy brow ;
And to guardian saints commend
Parent, brother, sister, friend ;
Let, once more, a lyre be heard
That of old thy bosom stirr'd.

Greet the minstrel while thou may'st,
For he passes on in haste :
Soon a higher, happier sphere
Will his solemn harpings hear.

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MAN, alas ! was only born
To tread a path of brier and thorn !
To the flattering dreams of youth
Manhood tells this blighting truth ;
And to manhood wither'd age
Opens a still darker page
Of Life's weary pilgrimage !”
Thus moody Melancholy cry'd ;
And thus a gentle voice replied ;
Making the embowering wood
A melodious solitude.

“ Helpless man is not his own ;
From his first to his last sigh
He, unseen, but not unknown,
Hath a guardian ever nigh—

One who doth benignly shed
Boundless blessings on his head ;
Blessings that should all his days
Turn his humble prayers to praise !

Grandeur ; in the skies that glow—
Beauty ; in the flowers that blow—
Brightness ; in the morning beams—
Music ; in the woods and streams—
Plenty ; in the golden ear—
And, throughout the varied year,
Hearing, motion, sense, and sight ;
Air, to breathe ; and day and night
For labour, pastime, sweet repose ;
And friendship, balm for many woes !
Are his—and (richer than the ore
That sparkles on Golconda's shore,
More precious than the priceless gem
That decks earth's proudest diadem !)
Eternal Truth, to soar away
To regions of celestial day ;

And muse on that mysterious sea
(Dark, fathomless futurity !)
Whose secrets shall in silence sleep
Till that dread audit ! when the deep,
Upheaving from its coral caves
The shipman's bones ; and when the graves,
Their dust resigning, mortals shew
Worlds of undying weal and woe !
As those on Alpine heights who dwell
(Regardless of their solemn spell)
Know not their altitude, nor see
Their grandeur, beauty, majesty ;
Man, to whom the heavens unroll
Their bright, prophetic, wondrous scroll ;
And with a paradise in view
That feers foretold, but never knew ;
Still blindly creeps, when he might climb
Yon Cross-crown'd mountain's brow sublime !
Say not in this transient scene
Rays of light and spots of green
Do not sometimes intervene—

When evening drops her dusky veil,
Sweetest sings the nightingale ;
And when darkest is the night,
The stars shine more intensely bright ;
And when sorrow deepens round,
Inward light doth most abound.
Listen !”—and the voice once more
Did its solemn music pour.





The Missionary.

T was a sunny Sabbath morn ; the spring-time of the year ;
The earth was green and beautiful ; the sky was bright and clear ;
And softly blew the balmy breeze, and sweetly rose the lay
Of feather'd woodland choristers blythe as the new-born day !

The village bells for matins rang ; the soothing, solemn sound
In every heart a glad response, a joyful echo found ;
Their music in the olden time had summon'd fire and son
While here they ran their earthly race—and when that race was run !

It was a pleasant sight to see how met, with one accord,
The old and young ; the rich and poor to magnify the Lord ;
And how content and cheerfulness and serious thought did seem
In every grateful heart to glow, in every eye to beam !

Among the Christian Worshippers who pray'd to be forgiven ;
And do their Father's will on earth, and see his face in heaven ;
Was one, a lonely wayfarer from some far-distant land,
Whom time had touch'd, stern monitor ! but with a tender hand.

Deep thought, in mournful majesty, sat on his noble brow ;
And if his cheek had once been fair, 'twas dark and sunburnt now ;
His stately form had borne the weight of something more than years ;
And who shall say his eyes had not been brighter ; but for tears ?

Apart, he humbly bow'd his head, and bent his knees in pray'r ;
And, for this holy day, cast off the coil of withering care ;
And when on wings of harmony hosannas rose sublime,
He seem'd into eternity to have escap'd from time !

Nor woke he from his sacred trance when ceased the organ's swell ;
For Truth divine from lucid lips so eloquently fell ;
That not until the porch was pass'd (the parting blessing given)
His spirit took to earth again its downward flight from heaven.

And now along the hallow'd ground where their forefathers sleep,
The home-returning villagers their pensive pathway keep :
Soon, seated at the frugal board, they'll bless the hand that gives
The bread, in peace and plenteousness, to every one that lives.

'The knell of death struck heavily upon the startled ear ;
Another sheep had left the fold, another star his sphere !
" To ashes ashes ! dust to dust !" the reverend preacher said ;
And slowly, with a hollow sound, the grave receiv'd its dead.

Ere on the poor inhabitant they heap'd his kindred clay,
The mourners took a lingering look ; then sorrowing went their way :
The setting sun his sheeny light upon the coffin threw ;
And loud the lark a carol sang as up to heaven he flew !

But who is he whose eyes are bent upon the sacred ground,
As they with turf so fresh and green build up the rising mound ?
And who is he that gazes too ; and fees, with anxious care,
A few of Spring's pale primroses are duly planted there ?

The Stranger from a distant land ! and one, whose blooming cheek,
And calm clear eye, and placid brow did early youth bespeak ;
That halcyon morning of the mind ! serenely bright and pure ;
But unprophetic of the day—when darkness shall endure !

A secret sympathy in souls, of high mysterious pow'r !
That waits not for the coming flow of introduction's hour,
Impell'd the Stranger, with a sigh, the mournful youth to ask
For whose lamented sake he sped his grateful heavenly task.

“ For one whom grief,” he softly said, “ alas ! too late we know,
Nor respite gave him nor relief, until it laid him low—
Thou lookest like a comforter !”—the solemn way he led ;
And left to its dark loneliness, and deep repose the dead !



THE Mourner sat in solitude, in silence and in gloom,
And gazed upon the vacant chair, whose tenant's in the tomb—
When, with a still and noiseless step, the vision met her view
Of one who many, many years had been a mourner too !

In her fast-fading trembling form, in her time-stricken face
There shone a meekly-beautiful and melancholy grace ;
And in her dark and lustrous eyes, now dimly seen thro' tears,
There flashed the intellectual fire of long-departed years !

With faltering tongue and broken voice, how tremulously low !
She spake ; and clasp'd her hands in prayer, and bow'd her head in woe—
“ The bitter cup, like Marah's fount, my Father gave may I,
With patience and humility, devoutly drink—and die !

The grave my early, only love hath hidden from my sight—
O, could I but as soundly sleep as he shall sleep to-night !
Then rise with him, as he shall rise, on wings angelic borne,
Never, never more to part ; and never more to mourn !

The sorrow that consum'd his soul, that sorrow too I share—
We had a Son, and he is lost !—or lives he ? and, ah ! where ?
What friendly roof-tree shelters him ? still doth he to the slave
Exalt the name and sing the praise of Him who walk'd the wave ?

For early in the Book of Life on Sinai's steep he saw
The trembling prophet from his Sire receive his holy law ;
And turn'd aside, enrapt, entranc'd, from that celestial, bright
Salvation-crowning miracle on Tabor's sacred height !

And while the Temple's veil was rent, and darknes hid the sky,
He saw upon Mount Calvary the Man of Sorrows die !
And heard the deep-ton'd thunders roll, and earth, and heaven and hell
Of that incarnate mystery the awful tidings tell !

And he commun'd with holy men, and told them his desire
To bear the Cross to heathen shores—they fann'd his youthful fire—
'Obey,' they cry'd, 'the monitor; its inward whisperings are
Responses earnest to a voice above the morning star!'

Go forth, a soldier of the Lord! in God's whole armour bright;
Gird on the spiritual sword, and fight the heavenly fight!
And when thou shalt (the battle won) in death, thy arms lay down,
Upon the Christian warrior's head will shine the Conqueror's crown!

Go forth, while life is in its spring, the messenger of Truth,
Which never falls with such sweet force as from the lips of youth!
No perils shall impede thy path; for He who calm'd the deep
Shall hush the winds, allay the storm, and rock the waves to sleep!—

We saw from his fair features fade health's blooming roseate hue;
We mark'd what tremors shook his frame; what secret sighs he drew!—
Ah! when will its serenity that lofty brow resume?
Their wonted life and joyousness those lambent eycs illume?

Now soon must boundless ocean bear to some wild savage shore
Our early hope!—perhaps ingulf!—I heard the torrent roar!
Death, in a thousand ghastly shapes, rush'd madly on my mind!
In vain I strove against despair—I could not be resign'd!

His father heard the stern resolve with calm unruffled breast;
It promis'd *him* a shorter, if not happier, path to rest;
A quicker manumission from this prison-house of clay;
A warrant to his spirit to take wings and bear away!

‘Regard me not—forego thy love—forget that I am here’—
(And, as he spake with quivering lip, would have suppress'd the tear)
But let thy filial piety a tender mother save;
Thy duty stand, for some *few* years, between her and the grave!

‘Are there not sinful souls enough in Britain’s wide domain?
The infidel, the hypocrite, the openly profane!
That thou should’st give thy sympathies to heathen men alone;
And bear the lamp to other lands that ought to light thy own?’—



THE silent day of parting came—for none could bid farewell !
And sad forebodings, like a cloud, upon our spirits fell—
My son went forth—and never bark a nobler champion bore
To plant the Holy Cross of Christ on Afric's burning shore !

Could prayers have stay'd the thunderbolt, and calm'd the troubled sea,
And chain'd the winds and waterspouts ; our prayers, my Sire ! to Thee,
Had sped that vessel o'er the deep as smoothly, for his sake,
As glides the skiff at summer-time along the rippling lake !

But moonless nights of grim repose succeeded storms by day ;
And lightnings, for the stars were not ! illum'd her watery way—
Now trembling on the mountain-wave, by furious whirlwinds driven ;
Now buried in the billowy gulf ; behold her rock'd and riven !

But storm-lash'd surges, hurricanes that head shall never harm
On whom the Lord Omnipotent hath spread his heavenly charm!—
They heard his voice—‘ Whom *I* appoint to preach my holy will
Shall thro' the tempest pass in peace—Ye winds! Ye waves! Be still.’

On one fair noon the land appear'd—the orient orb of day
Made lustrous with meridian light the mountains and the bay ;
Parch'd nature panted for the breeze ; man scarcely could respire ;
The glaſſy waters roll'd along in floods of liquid fire !

The arid hills and yellow fands their swarthy tribes display'd ;
Whose savage shouts and glittering spears distrust, alarm betray'd ;
But soon they met, in fellowship, the miffion o'er the wave—
It never came to conquer worlds on *this* dark side the grave !

The listening heathen heard with awe the gracious message sent ;
And on its young expositor his eye, in wonder, bent ;
He saw, by faith, to fallen man his paradise restor'd ;
He bound the Gospel to his heart ; and trembled and ador'd !

Dethron'd and trodden in the dust were all his idols grim ;
And for the cry of war arose the morn and evening hymn ;
He drank of the Redeemer's Cup, and brake His bread divine ;
And shar'd in the immortal hope that warms your hearts and mine.

Fierce fever laid the preacher low upon a bed of pain ;
It rag'd in every prostrate limb, it burn'd in every vein !
His weeping brethren pray'd for him—how answer'd was the pray'r
A joyful host of the redeem'd shall *one* bright day declare !

The solitary bark that rolls along the pathless deep,
With her freight of human souls may guardian angels keep !
And speed the heavenly messenger, ye spirits blest ! benign !
Who, by the light of Bethlehem's Star, pursues his course divine.



TEN winters since have pass'd away—again 'tis lovely Spring !
No tidings of the Wanderer its vernal breezes bring !
Delusive hope ! too long hast thou sustain'd my sickening heart ;
Adieu ! adieu ! enchantress fair ! from this sad hour we part.

For I shall never see him more ; for all, beneath the sun,
The Master bade his servant do hath he right nobly done !
And now, with full-voic'd Cherubim, he sits enthron'd on high ;
Or, gentle task ! to comfort me his spirit hovers nigh.

'Then would I from the realms of bliss his happy soul recall ?
And bind it, from mere selfishness, again in mortal thrall ?
My Father ! be the sinful thought forgotten and forgiven—
O, let him not descend to earth, but let me rise to heaven !'

The Mourner felt upon her fall a grief-subduing calm ;
The Peace of God shed in her heart its healing heavenly balm ;
And with a look of tenderneſs, and with an accent sweet,
She rais'd and kis'd, with tears of joy, the ſtripling at her feet.

“ Thy father to my fostering care thy infancy conſign'd ;
And he on whom the grave hath clos'd inform'd thy opening mind ;
And every leſſon that he taught, tho' highly prized before ;
And every pure ennobling thought thou'l learn to prize ſtill more !

Whate'er was good and beautiful, and generous, juſt and true
He pictur'd for thy young delight and emulation too ;
And led thee, with endearing art, thro' learning's classic bowers ;
And wisdom's paths of pleafantneſs he gaily ſtrew'd with flowers !

But when of Zion was his Song, to wondering eye and ear,
Th' Apocalyptic angel ſeem'd to have deſcended here,
Cloth'd with the rainbow of the throne ! the theme ſublime, august,
Did ſo entirely glorify, tranſigure mortal duſt !

The last of all thy honour'd race, if thou, to serve thy God,
Should'st tread the rugged pilgrim-path, the path thy father trod ;
No mother will be doom'd to mourn, to bring repentance deep ;
No happy home made desolate, o'er which to fondly weep.

But when (the harvest having reap'd) thou, after years of toil,
To mingle with thy kindred dust, shalt seek thy native soil ;
Tho' this lov'd roof ; yon village spire may sad remembrance wake ;
No pang will rise for blighted hearts once left behind to break !

A little while I would delay, kind heaven ! my parting hour,
To see this beauteous bud unfold into a lovely flow'r !
And then to know it one day will, when I am in repose,
Adorn the Garden of the Lord, and blossom like the rose !”

She paus'd ; (a deep convulsive sob was all the youth's reply)
And then upon the Stranger fix'd her dark inquiring eye ;
Their glances met—o'er memory pass'd a dim mysterious light—
A shadowy dream—again it pass'd across her aching sight—

“ Speak ! speak !”—She cry’d—but ere he spake, behold the brightening beam

Flash’d into full reality ! no longer ’twas a dream !—

“ Rejoice ! rejoice !—our prayer is heard—my lost ! my only one !—
Sing to the Lord Omnipotent !—Great God ! My Son ! My Son !



AS sweetly died the voice away,
On my vision broke the day ;
But the well-remember’d theme
Died not with the heavenly dream !



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